***Press* Release**

The Meteorological Office

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Christmas and Millennium Weather

Met. Office forecasters are predicting a bright and showery Christmas Day which looks like ending most people's dreams of a white Christmas. The showers are expected to be most frequent in the west and south of the country, but may fall as snow in the north, especially over high ground from Wales northwards. The temperatures will be reasonable for this time of year, but blustery winds will make it feel much colder for those walking off the effects of Christmas dinner.

Ewen McCallum, Head of Forecasting in The Met. Office, said: " Despite seasonal expectations, it's quite rare to get snow at Christmas time, and it looks like this year it came just a week too early for those hoping for a white Christmas." Looking further ahead to the start of the new millennium, it is expected to be quite mild for most parts except the far north. However, forecasters are predicting a windy spell, with rain or blustery showers threatening to dampen the spirits of many outdoor revellers.

Notes

1. A white Christmas according to the bookmakers is when snow falls on the roof of the London Weather Centre on Christmas Day, and under this criteria, there have been nine white Christmases this century.

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